



# Weekly Special Report



Produced by the Public Affairs Section

## INSIDE

## U.S. Grants Foster Community Development and Self-reliance

Addis Ababa, December 15, 2009 – The Embassy of the United States of America pledged \$90,000 in financial support today through the Ambassador's Special Self-Help Program to eight projects initiated by Ethiopian communities, schools, and NGOs. The Self-Help Program is a special source of support, allowing U.S. assistance to directly respond to needs at the community level, funding local initiatives that might otherwise not meet the criteria for traditional development assistance.



*Chargé d'Affaires Tulinabo Mushingi signing one of the Special Self-Help grants with Honorable Fatuma Abdella of the Mahi Difu Child Care & Development Association.*

"The community leaders you see here today are very important partners in our work to build a better, more prosperous tomorrow through grassroots development. All of the selected projects exemplify the United States' commitment to working with Ethiopian communities to promote self-reliance as well as to support local organizations in help-

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## U.S. Embassy and the Study Center Congratulate English Access Micro-Scholarship Students in Harar



*The English Access Micro-Scholarship graduates with Public Affairs Officer Alyson Grunder and The Study Center Director Ann Rispin.*

Addis Ababa (U.S. Embassy) – On December 12 at the Harar Education Bureau Hall, 43 students were recognized for their completion of the English Access Micro-Scholarship Program, a supplemental English language program co-sponsored by The Study Center in Harar and the Embassy of the United States of America in Addis Ababa. Since 2008, these 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students have been complementing their studies at government high

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## U.S. Grants Foster Community Development and Self-reliance . . .

ing others to help themselves,” said United States Chargé d’Affaires in Ethiopia Dr. Tulinabo Mushingi at a private signing ceremony at the American Embassy today.

The Special Self-Help Program prides itself on offering small-scale, short-term support that yields a large impact, bringing about tangible improvements in people’s lives. Communities funded through the Special Self-Help Program must commit to provide a significant local contribution, either financial or in kind, to support the proposed project. The eight projects launched today will have an impact on over 12,000 Ethiopians, living throughout the Afar; Oromia; Tigray; and the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples regions. Among the new projects are initiatives that will provide safe drinking water for ten rural communities, construct a library and 16 classrooms for four primary schools, provide desks to a school serving 1,920 students, and support income-generating activities that will improve the economic autonomy of women and girls in two communities. The newly funded 2009-2010 Ambassador’s Special Self-Help projects are:

**Alemu Woldehanna Primary School Library (SNNPR):** The 3,598 students of Alemu Woldehanna Primary School are without a library. This Self-Help grant will contribute to the construction of a library on the grounds of the school that is accessible to students at the same time that it serves as an active center for the greater community as well.

**Bedele Spring Water Development (Oromia):** The communities in ten localities of Bedele Woreda are forced to use unprotected water, compromising the health and well-being of residents. Self-Help funds will contribute to the

development of a spring water source in each of the ten locations, providing potable water for all.

**Community Vision Ethiopia - Women-Led Dairy Chain (SNNPR):** Most women in rural Kucha Woreda are engaged in small-scale dairy enterprises, but the income they generate is barely enough to cover basic living expenses. Children, particularly girls, must work to supplement the family income instead of attending school. With the assistance of Self-Help funding, this community will construct an efficient low-cost dairy collection/processing center and provide skills-training on dairy processing/ entrepreneurship, improving women’s socio-economic status and relieving girls of family dependence on their income.

**Guri Luchicha Primary School Construction (Oromia):** This mostly-Muslim highland community is in critical need of classroom space at the primary school level. A Self-Help grant will contribute to the construction of four classrooms, an administrative office, and a teaching aids center.

**Kudu Enqui Primary School Classrooms (Tigray):** Sebeya is the closest woreda to Eritrea where the Erob minority group is living. The existing classroom capacity of this community’s primary school, Kudi Enqui, is very limited. Self-Help will help expand their school by constructing six additional classrooms.

**MDCCDO Training-Based Weaving Project (Afar):** Despite being known for cotton production, the Afar people must travel more than 200 kilometers to purchase cloth in neighboring Amhara regions. During these journeys conflicts can arise, particularly among women. Self-Help support will help alleviate conflict and generate sustainable income for Afari women by con-

tributing to the construction of a training hall, providing training in hand-weaving techniques, and purchasing hand-weaving machines.

**Nano Jidu Primary School Addition (Oromia):** Determined to educate its children, the Nano Jidu community built a primary school for grades 1 through 4, along with a conference hall and a latrine. Upon graduation from grade 4, however, boys and girls must travel a long distance to attend grades 5-8. The journey is particularly problematic for girls, who, out of fear of being abducted or raped on their way to school, often drop-out and marry at a young age. To assist in furthering children’s education and safety, Self-Help funds will contribute to the construction of classrooms for grades 5 through 8 on the existing school grounds.

**School Desks for Community-Built Tulu Bacho Primary School (Oromia):** Wolencomi’s one primary school could accommodate only 31 percent of its more than 5,000 school-aged children, so recently the community mobilized to construct an additional school, Tulu Bacho. Tulu Bacho’s 1,920 students are still sitting on stones and logs as the school is without desks. The Self-Help grant providing these desks will be the final step in completing this community-built school.

Projects selected for Self-Help funding require a substantial community contribution, must be completed in one year, and should benefit the greatest number of people possible. Applications for the 2010-2011 Ambassador’s Special Self-Help Program are currently being accepted through March 31, 2010. The Self-Help application and further information may be found on the U.S. Embassy Addis Ababa website at [http://ethiopia.usembassy.gov/self\\_help.html](http://ethiopia.usembassy.gov/self_help.html). ♦

## Obama Accepts Nobel Prize with Call for Faith in Human Progress

By Stephen Kaufman  
Staff Writer

**Washington** — With “deep gratitude and deep humility,” President Obama accepted the Nobel Peace Prize with an acknowledgement as the commander of a military involved in two wars that he and other world leaders are challenged to reconcile “two seemingly irreconcilable truths: that war is sometimes necessary, and war at some level is an expression of human folly.”

Speaking in Oslo on December 10, Obama said that compared to other recipients of the prize, such as Nelson Mandela, Albert Schweitzer and Martin Luther King Jr., “my accomplishments are slight.” At the same time, there are millions of unrecognized men and women all over the world who are suffering in pursuit of justice, working to relieve suffering and “far more deserving of this honor than I,” he said.

He acknowledged that the Nobel Committee’s decision to give him the award is controversial, and said that, as president, he bears the responsibility for sending American soldiers into combat where they may kill or be killed.

There is nothing weak, passive or naïve in the lives of India’s Mahatma Gandhi or King, who demonstrated the moral force of nonviolence, Obama said, “but as a head of state sworn to protect and defend my nation, I cannot be guided by their examples alone.”

“Evil does exist in the world. A nonviolent movement could not have halted Hitler’s armies. Negotiations cannot convince al-Qaida’s leaders to lay down their arms. To say that force may sometimes be necessary is not a call to cynicism; it is a recognition of history, the imperfec-



*Norwegian Nobel Committee chairman Thorbjørn Jagland (L) hands the Peace Prize diploma and medal to U.S. President Barack Obama during a ceremony in Oslo on December 10, 2009. President Obama recognizes the millions of people suffering in pursuit of justice who are “far more deserving of this honor than I.”*

tions of man and the limits of reason,” he said.

In the post-Cold War era, there may no longer be the prospect of war between two nuclear superpowers, but nuclear proliferation “may increase the risk of catastrophe,” he said. And while terrorism is nothing new in human history, “modern technology allows a few small men with outsized rage to murder innocents on a horrific scale.”

But even if human nature is not perfect, the human condition can still be perfected, and the world can be made a better place, according to Obama. People like Gandhi and King preached a message of love and shared a “fundamental faith in human progress,” Obama said,

and “that must always be the North Star that guides us on our journey.”

The president said that in order to achieve a lasting peace, there must be alternatives to violence “that are tough enough to actually change behavior.” He cited efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and said those who seek peace cannot stand by as nations such as Iran and North Korea arm themselves for nuclear war.

The same principle applies to regimes that brutalize their own people, he said. “When there is genocide in Darfur, systematic rape in Congo, repression in Burma — there must be consequences.”

The closer the international community stands together in response to security and human rights threats, “the less likely we will be faced with the choice between armed intervention and complicity in oppression,” Obama said.

He pledged that the United States will continue to be a voice for universal human aspirations. “We will bear witness to the quiet dignity of reformers like Aung Sang Suu Kyi; to the bravery of Zimbabweans who cast their ballots in the face of beatings; to the hundreds of thousands who have marched silently through the streets of Iran,” he said.

“It is telling that the leaders of these governments fear the aspirations of their own people more than the power of any other nation. And it is the responsibility of all free people and free nations to make clear that these movements — these movements of hope and history — they have us on their side,” the president said.

Obama said that achieving a just peace also requires investments in development, saying “true peace is not just free-

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## U.S. Says al-Qaida Has Been Degraded, but Is Still a Threat

**By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.**  
**Staff Writer**

**Washington** — The terrorist group al-Qaida remains a significant security threat to the United States but is finding it tougher to raise money, train new recruits and plan attacks outside of South Asia, says the U.S. coordinator for counterterrorism.

“The group is under severe pressure in Pakistan and Afghanistan, where the [United States] and its allies have succeeded in severely degrading its operational leadership,” Ambassador Daniel Benjamin said.

In addition to these setbacks, al-Qaida has not been successful in carrying out attacks that would disrupt governments in the Arab world, which has been a long-term focus of the group, Benjamin said December 9 during a Jamestown Foundation conference on terrorism held in Washington. The terrorist group long has sought to mobilize the masses in the Arab world in an effort to establish Islamic emirates throughout the region, he said.

However, indiscriminate targeting of

Muslim civilians in Iraq and Pakistan has alienated many who had previously been sympathetic to al-Qaida’s larger aspirations, Benjamin added.

“The result has been both popular disaffection and a backlash from clerics in Muslim countries who have issued fatwas (religious edicts) against the killing of other Muslims, notably in Iraq,” Benjamin said. In addition, al-Qaida’s ideological hard line has alienated more pragmatic organizations and individuals who might previously have been receptive to insurgency, he said.

Denunciations of al-Qaida by clerics have damaged the group’s attempts to claim any religious legitimacy and called into question the proper use of violence, especially in countries where there is no overt military action, he said. Finally, al-Qaida and its affiliated groups have become increasingly vague about who their enemy is, which has caused confusion among insurgent groups about their strategic direction, he added.

But Benjamin said al-Qaida has also proven to be adaptable and resilient, especially in ungoverned and undergoverned areas where there are tribal con-

flicts, and among some radicals who have persuaded extremists to adopt their cause.

“Faced with this continuing and evolving threat, President Obama has articulated a clear policy — to disrupt, dismantle and defeat al-Qaida and its allies” in Afghanistan and Pakistan, Benjamin said. “That is our overriding objective, and to achieve it we are using all the tools at our disposal.”

The United States is working with local authorities in weakly governed areas of the region to bolster security forces to prevent al-Qaida operatives from securing safe havens, he said. U.S. intelligence and law enforcement agencies and those of allies continue to disrupt terrorist plots in the United States and elsewhere. The United States is also working with the international financial community to deny resources to al-Qaida and its supporters, he said.

Because funding sources are being denied to al-Qaida affiliate groups, they have increasingly turned to kidnappings for ransom to raise new funds, Benjamin said. In response, U.S. officials are en-

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## U.S. Embassy and the Study Center Congratulate English Access . . .

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schools with approximately three hours per week of additional coursework at the Study Center. The Study Center program focuses on English language instruction and practice, computing, entrepreneurship and life skills.

The ceremony at the Harar Education Bureau Hall was attended by a number of Education Bureau officials. U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Officer Alyson Grunder noted that the graduating students were the first students in Ha-

rar to receive the English Access Micro-Scholarships, a program sponsored by the U.S. State Department to promote English language learning in Ethiopia and many other countries. The Embassy is also co-sponsoring this micro-scholarship program at The Study Center in Addis Ababa. Grunder remarked, “We are deeply impressed by the hard work and commitment that the English Access Micro-Scholarship students in Harar have demonstrated and we hope that their studies will enhance their future educational and career opportunities.”

In addition to celebrating the graduation of the first English Access students, the U.S. Embassy and The Study Center welcomed 40 new students into the second cohort of participants in the Harar English Access program. Half of the 40 scholarship recipients are female, with all ethnic and religious groups represented. The students were selected from different public high schools around Harar through a competitive process. ♦

## Illinois Prison Will Hold Some Guantánamo Detainees

By Stephen Kaufman  
Staff Writer

**Washington** — The Obama administration is acquiring and upgrading the Thomson Correctional Center in Illinois to house detainees currently being held at the U.S. naval base at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, as part of its effort to close the facility.

The United States is trying to close Guantánamo “in a timely, secure, and lawful manner,” senior administration officials told reporters December 15.

The Guantánamo facility has housed non-U.S. citizens believed to have committed acts of terrorism since 2002. However, President Obama ordered it to be closed and for U.S. officials to undertake a case-by-case review of the remaining inmates.

Along with generating criticism over the legal rights of the detainees, the Obama administration officials say the Guantánamo facility’s existence serves as a recruitment tool for violent extremists.

“Al-Qaida continues to this day to use the detention facility at Guantánamo Bay to support their recruitment efforts as they continue to plot against the United States, our allies and our interests,” the officials said.

The acquisition of the Thomson facility “is an important step forward in the president’s goal of protecting the American people,” as well as “ensuring that the detainees at the Guantánamo Bay facility face swift and certain justice in a way

that they have not now for over eight years.”

In a May 21 speech, Obama outlined his framework for what to do with the remaining detainees as a determination is made in the individual cases.

Those who are accused of violating U.S. criminal laws will be transferred to the federal jurisdiction. For example, Attorney General Eric Holder announced November 13 that the suspected master-

decision to send six Chinese Uighurs to Palau.

The Thomson prison in Illinois will hold detainees who are accused of violating international military law, and the military commissions that will try their cases will be held on the premises of the facility, the officials said.

Obama had warned on May 21 that it is possible some detainees will not be able to be prosecuted for a number of legal

reasons but would still pose a clear danger to the United States and its allies.

“These are people who, in effect, remain at war with the United States,” Obama said, but he added that their detention could not be unbounded.

“That is why my administration has begun to re-shape these standards to ensure they are in line with the rule of law,” the president said. The standards being developed

must be lawful, must be fair, and must have a thorough process of periodic review, he said.

The senior administration officials said the case-by-case reviews of the detainees are still ongoing, and “there are no specific cases to date that meet that standard that the president has signed off on.”

If any detainees are found to be dangerous but not able to be prosecuted, they would be subject to judicial and congressional oversight, as well as a periodic review that incorporates updated intelligence and threat assessment informa-

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*The Obama Administration says it will transfer Guantánamo detainees to the Thomson prison in Illinois.*

mind of the September 11, 2001, terror attacks, Khalid Sheikh Muhammad, as well as four other al-Qaida operatives will appear before a U.S. federal court in New York.

Some detainees will be transferred overseas. In the most recent instance, the Obama administration announced December 9 that Kuwaiti citizen Fouad Mahmoud al-Rabiah had been transferred to the control of the Kuwaiti government.

The United States has also repatriated detainees who were cleared for release, or released them to third countries for resettlement, such as the October 31

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## United States Introduces New Biological Weapons Security Strategy

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.  
Staff Writer

**Washington** — The United States takes biological weapons threats seriously, and the Obama administration has adopted a new approach that is designed to counter today's threats while preventing the misuse of science, Under Secretary of State Ellen Tauscher says.

"President Obama fully recognizes that a major biological weapons attack on one of the world's major cities could cause as much death and economic and psychological damage as a nuclear attack," Tauscher said December 9 at an international conference in Geneva on the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). The convention entered into force March 26, 1975, and to date approximately 160 nations have ratified it.

"We believe we have developed an approach that strikes a balance between supporting scientific progress and curbing and stopping the potential for abuse," she said.

The White House formally released its National Strategy for Countering Biological Threats ( [http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/National\\_Strategy\\_for\\_Countering\\_BioThreats.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/National_Strategy_for_Countering_BioThreats.pdf) ) (PDF, 480KB) December 9 in Washington.

Tauscher, who is under secretary for arms control and international security, said the strategy promotes global health security by increasing the availability of research and products to reduce the impact of outbreaks from infectious diseases — natural or man-made. In addition, the United States will work toward



*Under Secretary of State Ellen Tauscher.*

establishing and reinforcing norms against the misuse of the life sciences, she said.

The United States will also work to curb the development, production and stockpiling of biological and toxin weapons. And the United States pledged to revitalize the convention as the primary forum for global outreach and coordination, she said.

Tauscher told delegates to the international conference that a few envelopes containing anthrax spores paralyzed the Congress in October 2001 just weeks after terrorists attacked the United States on September 11.

Tauscher, then a member of Congress, said her office along with the others in the Senate and House of Representatives was closed for nearly eight weeks to be fully sanitized.

The United States is "steadfast" in its commitment to the convention and will continue to meet its commitments to not develop, acquire, produce or possess biological weapons, Tauscher said. But she added that the United States will not seek to revive negotiations on a verification protocol to the convention.

"We have carefully reviewed previous efforts to develop a verification protocol and have determined that a legally binding protocol would not achieve meaningful verification or greater security," Tauscher said. "We believe that a protocol would not be able to keep pace with the rapidly changing nature of the biological weapons threat."

*(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov>) ♦*

### Illinois Prison Will Hold Some Guantánamo . . .

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tion, the officials said. Thereafter, they would be held under the authority the U.S. Congress granted then-President Bush in the 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force.

"The bottom line is, we're trying to get to zero here on the detainees," the officials said. "And if we have to detain any without trial, we'll do so as a last resort. And as the president made clear in that [National] Archives speech, it would not be the decision of one man alone."

*(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov>) ♦*

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## United States Condemns Iran's Nuclear Sanctions Violations

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.  
Staff Writer

**Washington** — The U.N. ambassadors from the United States, Britain and France strongly condemned repeated sanctions violations by Iran over its controversial nuclear development program, and warned of possible further sanctions.

In November, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) board of governors voted to censure Iran for building a second uranium enrichment plant at Qom, and the Iranian regime followed up by announcing plans to build 10 more plants to enrich uranium, which is a necessary building block for constructing nuclear weapons.

U.S. Ambassador Susan Rice told the U.N. Security Council during debate December 10 that Iran has repeatedly been caught breaking the rules.

“Should Iran continue to fail to meet its obligations, the international community will have to consider further actions,” Rice said. “Engagement cannot be a one-way street. Iran must conclusively demonstrate a similar willingness to engage constructively and address the serious issues associated with its nuclear program.”

Rice told reporters in New York that “we think that these violations need to be treated urgently and seriously. And we have said repeatedly that time is short” for Iran to respond and curb its nuclear development program.

France’s U.N. ambassador, Gérard Araud, called for new Security Council sanctions, while British U.N. Ambassador Mark Lyall Grant said a decision on sanctions would depend on Tehran’s nuclear program and its response to economic and political incentives. The Russian and Chinese am-



*U.S. Ambassador Susan Rice.*

bassadors counseled patience and further diplomatic efforts, but stopped short of suggesting new sanctions by the Security Council. Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States are permanent members of the Security Council.

The IAEA report shows that instead of complying with its nuclear obligations, Iran has “expanded its work in uranium enrichment and heavy-water-related activities, and has conducted a multiyear effort to construct a clandestine enrichment facility, in contravention of the U.N. Security Council requirements and IAEA obligations,” State Department spokesman Ian Kelly told reporters in November. The IAEA report, published November 16, comes after its inspectors visited Iran’s newly revealed nuclear facility near the city of Qom.

Six nations — Britain, China, France, Russia, the United States and Germany, known as the P-5+1 — have been negotiating with Iran over its nuclear program, but talks stalled when they insisted that

Iran would have to suspend uranium enrichment. This group grew out of earlier efforts by Britain, France and Germany to convince Iranian officials to suspend uranium enrichment in return for a package of incentives. The six powers, together, also offered Iran a package of trade and diplomatic incentives three years ago to forgo its uranium enrichment efforts, and added to the incentives last year, but Iranian authorities continued to reject suspension of uranium enrichment as a precondition to talks.

Uranium enrichment is a necessary component of building a nuclear bomb. Iran may now have enough enriched nuclear fuel to make a bomb, a senior U.S. diplomat said September 9 before the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna.

The U.N. Security Council previously imposed three rounds of political and economic sanctions to convince Iranian leaders to halt uranium enrichment and give up plans for a weapons program.

Rice said the IAEA report underscores the international community’s increased, serious and unified concerns that Iran continues to defy its requirements and obligations. The United States and other Western nations believe that if Iran successfully develops nuclear weapons along with medium-to-long-range missiles, it could destabilize security throughout the Gulf region and the Middle East.

“The United States condemns the serious and repeated sanctions violations reported,” she said. “In the last year, there have been three reported incidents. All three involved the transfer of arms or ammunition from Iran to Syria.”

These illicit arms transfers only add to destabilization in the fragile Middle East, she added. ♦



## Gift of a Goat Brings Opportunity to Ugandan Girl

By Kathryn McConnell  
Staff Writer

**Washington** — Born into poverty in 1984 in a remote Ugandan village, Beatrice Biira grew up dreaming of going to school. But instead of setting off for a classroom each day, Biira stayed at home helping her mother care for her five younger siblings and planting the family's fields. Her parents could not afford to buy her a school uniform or books. An education, Biira thought, was out of reach.

But far away — in Niantic, Connecticut — a church youth group decided to donate to a good cause. They sent money to the nonprofit group Heifer International, an Arkansas-based nonprofit that gives small livestock to poor families.

When Biira was 9 years old, her family was among 12 in Kisinga village to receive a goat from Heifer, purchased with the donations from the people in Niantic. Biira named the goat Mugisa, or "Luck." Mugisa soon gave birth to two kids, and the three animals produced enough milk to give Biira's family a nutritional boost. Each morning, Biira sold the milk left after the family's needs were met. Within three months, she had saved enough money to pay for a uniform and supplies and begin school.

Two years later, a group of Heifer supporters came to Kisinga to see firsthand the effects the donations were having on villagers' lives. It was clear to the visitors

that the goats' milk had improved the villagers' health. The families used goat manure to fertilize gardens, improving yields of other healthy food. And some families that had received goats had

saved enough money from milk sales to start small businesses or build houses.

Among the visitors were children's book author Page McBrier and illustrator Lori Lohstoeter. The two decided to write a book about how the small gift of a goat was able to provide Biira with the opportunity of an education. *Beatrice's Goat* was published in 2001 and became a New York Times best-selling children's book.

A portion of the sales goes to Heifer for providing poor families around the world with farm animals or honeybees and with training to care for them.

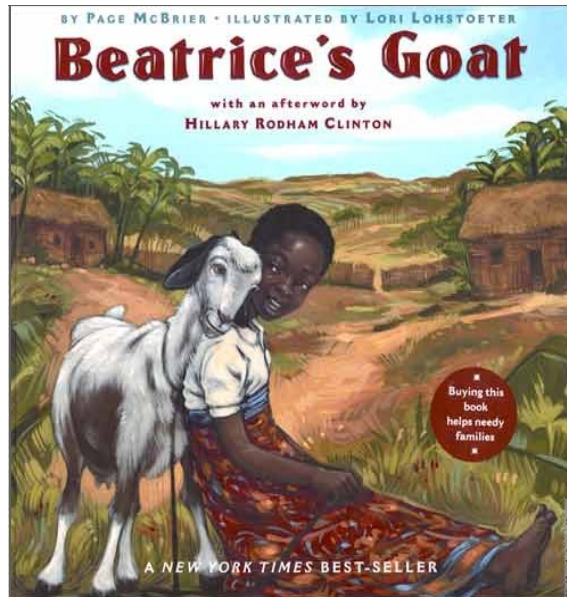
As Biira got older, another person who had been among the visitors to Kisinga in 1995 stayed in touch. Rosalee Sinn had felt an instant feeling of friendship toward Biira, and she encouraged her to

vice at the University of Arkansas in Little Rock, Arkansas, from which she expects to receive a master's degree in May 2010.

*(Continued on page 9)*



*Beatrice Biira waves to friends during her graduation from Connecticut College.*



*Beatrice Biira inspired *Beatrice's Goat*, a best-selling children's book.*



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## Madagascar Must Fully Embrace Democracy, United States Says

Washington — The United States government repeats its demand that Madagascar's political leadership move forward rapidly toward the establishment of democratic constitutional rule. Additional delay in meeting benchmarks will undermine Madagascar's credibility and its prospects for continued eligibility for benefits under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), State Department spokesman Ian Kelly warned December 10.

In a written statement, Kelly said the March 2009 "undemocratic transfer of power and the inability to establish a return to democracy have violated one of the vital criteria for Madagascar's continued eligibility for these trade preferences."

"The U.S. government urges the Malagasy political leadership to take concrete steps toward reestablishing a constitutional democratic government and the rule of law."

These steps, he said, "include the announcement of the full Transitional Government Cabinet; establishment of a National Reconciliation Council; clear progress toward establishing an Independent Electoral Commission; and setting an election deadline with an update of those election plans for the international community. Failure to achieve these benchmarks by December 15, 2009, would seriously threaten Madagascar's continued eligibility for AGOA's trade benefits in 2010."

Kelly acknowledged that Madagascar has been a leader in use of the trade benefits

under AGOA since becoming eligible in October 2000.

The act requires the U.S. president annually to designate countries as eligible to receive the benefits of AGOA if they have met or are making progress toward certain criteria, including the rule of law and political pluralism.

The complete text of Kelly's statement ( <http://www.america.gov/st/texttrans-english/2009/December/20091211135111eaifas0.6483837.html> ) is available on America.gov.

*(Distributed by the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov>) ♦*

## Gift of a Goat Brings Opportunity to Ugandan Girl . . .

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Now 25 years old, Biira said college life has required much work and patience. She wants to use her education to start an organization to help women and children in her home community, she said in a December 2 webchat ( <http://www.america.gov/st/webchat-english/2009/December/20091203115226xjsnommis0.8804852.html> ).

Biira has returned to her village once each year since she moved to the United States. She encourages children there, especially girls, to set their sights on getting an education. The opportunity to go

to school opens many doors, she said. While the traditional view in Africa has been that girls need not go to school because they will marry at a young age and start having children, "fortunately, such beliefs are fading away."

She also encourages women to start small businesses. "Women have a lot of talents they can develop to earn income," she said. Many Ugandan women she knows are "hardworking, resilient, persistent and willing to work to improve their financial status."

*(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov>) ♦*

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## Clinton Lays Out Obama Administration Agenda on Human Rights

By Jane Morse  
Staff Writer

**Washington** — Support for democracy and the fostering of economic development are the cornerstones of the Obama administration's agenda for promoting human rights around the world, says Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton.

In a speech December 14 at Georgetown University in Washington, Clinton presented the president's goals for human rights in the 21st century. She said human rights must be seen in a broad context that recognizes both "negative and positive requirements." People everywhere, Clinton said, should be free from tyranny in whatever form and they must also be free "to seize the opportunities of a full life." For human rights to be fulfilled, she said, people must be "free from the oppression of want — want of food, want of health, want of education, and want of equality in law and in fact."

The secretary said democracy fosters human rights by allowing people to fulfill their potential through the freedom to choose laws and leaders, to share and access information, to speak, criticize and debate. "They must be free to worship, associate, and to love in the way that they choose," she said. "And they must be free to pursue the dignity that comes with self-improvement and self-reliance, to build their minds and their skills, bring their goods to the marketplace, and participate in the process of innovation."

"Democracy has proven the best political system for making human rights a human reality over the long term," Clinton said. She added that the Obama administration will promote democracy "not because we want other countries to be like us, but because we want all people to



*U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton delivers remarks on human rights to students at Georgetown University's Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service in Washington, DC.*

enjoy consistent protection of the rights that are naturally theirs, whether they were born in Tallahassee or Tehran."

Human rights, democracy and development are not three separate goals with three separate agendas. "To make a real and long-term difference in people's lives, we have to tackle all three simultaneously with a commitment that is smart, strategic, determined and long-term," she said.

While acknowledging that there is no single formula for fostering human rights, democracy and development that can be applied to every situation, Clinton outlined critical elements in the Obama administration's plan for action.

Holding all nations accountable to universal standards of human rights is a priority, she said. The United States will assess its own performance, she said, by participating through the United Nations

in the Universal Periodic Review of its own human rights record.

"By holding ourselves accountable, we reinforce our moral authority to demand that all governments adhere to obligations under international law," Clinton said.

In enforcing human rights standards, the United States will balance pressure and incentives in a pragmatic approach that does not compromise its principles, she said, and will work for positive change within multilateral institutions. In the search for innovative ways to achieve results, the secretary said she has commissioned the first-ever Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review to develop a forward-looking strategy.

Human rights, she said, cannot be just a project for governments — change must be driven by citizens and their communities. Among the tools to promote grass-roots efforts is the Global Human Rights Defenders Fund, which last year provided targeted legal and relocation assistance to 170 human rights defenders around the world. Spot-lighting human rights activists' efforts and supporting civil society leaders help lay the foundation for change from the bottom up, she said.

For its part, Clinton added, the United States "will not ignore or overlook places of seemingly intractable tragedy and despair."

A transcript of Clinton's speech ( <http://www.america.gov/st/texttrans-english/2009/December/20091214162328eafas0.2046865.html> ) is available from America.gov. (This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov>) ♦

## U.S. Sees Natural Resources as Tool to Combat Climate Change

By Stephen Kaufman  
Staff Writer

**Washington** — Under President Obama's leadership, the United States is reforming the way it manages its natural resources to demonstrate its commitment to confronting climate change, U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar told delegates at the U.N. Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen.

In his December 10 remarks Salazar said the president is leading the country "out of the darkness of a failed energy policy and into the dawn of a clean energy economy," which he described as "the world's most exciting and most important growth industry." These changes will bring economic as well as environmental benefits, he said.

"We are delivering this change because the U.S. can't afford to fall behind in the energy technologies that will shape this century," Salazar said. "We can't afford the hundreds of billions of dollars we spend each year on imported oil — or the risks our oil dependence poses to our national security."

In addition, climate change is affecting the entire American continent. "It's making droughts drier and longer, floods more dangerous and hurricanes more severe," he said.

The Department of the Interior, which Salazar heads, oversees the use of U.S. natural resources. The secretary said he and his staff are finding ways to manage American resources to serve as clean energy producers, carbon dioxide catchers, and "buffers against the impacts of a rising tide and a changing climate."

Renewable energy sources, such as wind turbines on the U.S. Atlantic coast, potentially could generate 1,000 gigawatts



*Interior Secretary Ken Salazar says the United States is adapting the use of its natural resources to confront climate change.*

of energy, which Salazar said is "greater than our national electricity demand." There is also "huge solar potential in the deserts of the Southwest," as well as geothermal energy opportunities and ways to increase hydropower production inside the United States, he said.

With currently proposed solar and wind projects, "more than 5,300 megawatts of new capacity could be ready for construction by the end of 2010 — enough to power almost 1.6 million homes," he said, adding the construction will also create more than 48,000 jobs.

If the United States "fully pursues its potential for wind energy on land and offshore," Salazar predicted, by 2030 wind power will be able to generate as much as 20 percent of U.S. electricity supplies

and create a quarter-million jobs in the process.

Salazar said the U.S. Geological Survey, part of his department, is investigating whether carbon dioxide can be captured and stored underground. It is also working with scientists from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to assess how much carbon dioxide can be absorbed by plants and soils.

Without counting the states of Alaska or Hawaii, the researchers found that almost 90 billion metric tons of carbon dioxide "or the equivalent of around 50 years of U.S. carbon dioxide emissions at current levels" are stored. U.S. terrestrial ecosystems are soaking up the carbon dioxide equivalent of about 30 percent of U.S. fossil fuel emissions of carbon dioxide, he said.

That finding "has shown that U.S. lands are critical to the carbon equation." That means restoring ecosystems and protecting some areas from development and deforestation, he said.

The interior secretary said the Obama administration has sown "the seeds of the clean energy economy" in the United States during its first 11 months in office. By the end of 2010, there will be "new solar plants under construction in the desert, new wind turbines spinning over the prairies, new tools and technologies being deployed across the world," he said.

*(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov>) ♦*



## Major Emitters to Deliver Energy Technology to Developing World

By Stephen Kaufman  
Staff Writer

**Washington** — Developing countries will receive easier access to clean and renewable energy technology such as solar and LED lights, as well as financing and improved information sharing, through a five-year, \$350 million plan announced by the Obama administration December 14.

According to a White House fact sheet, under the Renewables and Efficiency Deployment Initiative, known as Climate REDI, the United States will provide \$85 million for the plan, with contributions also coming from the Major Economies Forum on Energy and Climate Change (MEF), a group of countries including the United States that are collectively responsible for more than 85 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions.

The four components of the Climate REDI program will “accelerate deployment of renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies in developing countries — reducing greenhouse gas emissions, fighting energy poverty and improving public health for the most vulnerable, particularly women and children,” the fact sheet said.

The program to accelerate deployment of solar home electricity systems and LED lanterns targets those without electricity who must otherwise use kerosene, which is more expensive and emits dangerous fumes and pollutants. It will “yield immediate economic and public health benefits by providing households with low-cost and quality-assured solar alternatives,” according to the fact sheet.

To support and accelerate the launch of the World Bank’s Strategic Climate Fund, Climate REDI creates a Scaling-up Renewable Energy Program (S-REP) to give policy support and technical assistance to low-income countries that are develop-



*U.S. Energy Secretary Dr. Steven Chu announced the Climate REDI program at the COP-15 conference in Copenhagen.*

ing renewable energy strategies. S-REP will also “underwrite additional capital costs associated with renewable energy investments.” The bulk of the \$350 million initiative — \$250 million — will be used to fund S-REP, according to the fact sheet.

The financing used to scale up early-stage low-carbon products will help “bring down costs and remove barriers to deployment,” as well as “catalyze investment by the private sector.”

The third component calls for enhanced cooperation on standards and labeling systems among MEF countries for energy-efficient appliances, which would help “create unprecedented economies of scale for these appliances.” Better labeling will help consumers avoid standard renewable energy products and guide them toward “quality-assured and high-efficiency” products, as well as remove the lowest-efficiency appliances

from the market, the fact sheet said.

Climate REDI will also establish an online information-sharing platform for the MEF countries to exchange technical resources, policy experience and best practices in deploying clean energy. The online resources will be shared with the rest of world.

### MAJOR EMITTERS DEVELOP TECHNOLOGY ACTION PLANS

The White House fact sheet also announced that the MEF countries have developed action plans for 10 clean energy options that countries can use to accelerate the development and deployment of low-carbon energy alternatives.

The plans “summarize [the] mitigation potential of high-priority technologies, highlight best practice policies, and provide a menu of specific actions,” the fact sheet said. The technologies identified are: advanced vehicles; bioenergy; building energy efficiency; carbon capture, use and storage; high-efficiency, low-emissions coal; industrial energy efficiency; marine energy; smart grid; solar energy; and wind energy.

According to the fact sheet, the United States will be the lead country among the MEF countries for the plans on building energy efficiency and industrial energy efficiency.

The White House fact sheet also announced that the MEF and other countries will meet in Washington in 2010 for a Clean Energy Ministerial to “drive this work forward and continue concrete action on global clean energy technology deployment.”

*(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov>) ♦*

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## Global Food Supply Under Stress from Climate Change

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.  
Staff Writer

**Washington** — By 2050, global food production will have to double from current levels to keep up with a hungry world, but the delicately balanced ecosystem that produces food in abundance is already under considerable stress as climate change erodes crop production, says U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack.

"This increased demand will have to be met under increasing water scarcity, heightened salinity, and more erratic weather and climate patterns," Vilsack said at the international climate change conference held in Copenhagen. The conference aims to draft an internationally binding treaty to control greenhouse gas emissions causing the Earth's temperature to rise.

Vilsack said that while global warming is affecting everyone, farmers, ranchers and others making their living off the land will be affected even more because of their particular vulnerabilities and challenges.

"Higher temperatures, changing rainfall patterns and more frequent extreme events like droughts and flooding threatens to reduce yields and increase the occurrence of crop failure," he said December 12 during "Agriculture and Rural



*U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack.*

Development Day," a daylong event at the University of Copenhagen.

A recent study by the International Food Policy Research Institute showed that rice and wheat yields in developing nations could decrease as much as 19 percent and 34 percent respectively by 2050 because of global warming. Vilsack said agriculture must play a role in curbing the impact of climate change, adding that "we are not currently on an optimum research trajectory to meet these challenges."

The United States recently launched the Agriculture Department's National Institute of Food and Agriculture to focus farm science on new outcomes that are designed to end world hunger and lessen

the effects of global warming on farming and forestry, he said.

"Our researchers are now working to develop stress-resistant crops that are drought-tolerant, heat-tolerant and saline-resistant," he said. Research is also being directed at making crops more resistant to pests and diseases through genetic engineering rather than relying on chemicals.

During the Group of Eight (G8) major economies meeting in Italy in July, world leaders pledged to provide \$22 billion over three years to increase international assistance for agricultural development, which includes \$3.5 billion from the United States, Vilsack said.

But that alone will not resolve the major food security issues. It will take firm leadership from major developed and developing nations at the climate change conference to begin the process of changing the world and thwarting global warming, he said.

Want to do something about climate change? Join the global conversation on Facebook ( <http://www.facebook.com/ConversationsClimate> ) or share your thoughts below. ♦

## U.S. Embassy and the Study Center Congratulate English Access . . .

*(Continued from page 4)*  
couraging governments to adopt no-concessions policies with terrorist groups that use kidnapping and other criminal activity to pay for their operations, he said.

But, Benjamin said, that is not enough. He said governments need to confront the political, social and economic condi-

tions that enemies exploit to win new recruits.

"The threat is global and our enemies latch on to grievances on behalf of the entire Muslim world, so we must work to resolve the long-standing problems that fuel those grievances," Benjamin said. "At the top of the list is the Arab-Israeli conflict, and ... President Obama, Secre-

tary [of State Hillary Rodham] Clinton and Special Envoy George Mitchell are working very hard to resolve it."

*(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov>)* ♦

## World Needs Political Will to Combat Climate Change

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.  
Staff Writer

**Washington** — U.S. Commerce Secretary Gary Locke told the U.N. Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen that the world has simultaneous environmental and economic deliverance within its grasp, but only if it can find the political will to act.

"If we take serious action to combat climate change, we won't just be passing on a cleaner, healthier planet to our children. We'll also be laying a foundation for decades of sustainable global prosperity," Locke said at the conference December 11.

"What's required is nothing less than completely rethinking the way we produce and consume energy," he added in his remarks to the 192 delegations attending the largest international conference on global warming in history.

For more than a century, most of the world has enjoyed two luxuries that propelled the greatest burst of economic growth in history: cheap and abundant fossil fuels like oil, coal and natural gas, and no concern for or knowledge of the impact of the greenhouse gas emissions caused by burning fossil fuels, Locke told delegates.

Locke said that over the next few decades the world will need to rebuild and reinvent nearly all industrial activity, from power generation and transportation to manufacturing and construction, to run efficiently and cheaply in a world that learns to rely less on fossil fuels.

"When we talk about the potential of job

creation arising from clean energy investments, we're not just talking about someone working for a solar or wind company," he said. "We're talking about creating an entirely new model of economic growth."



*President Obama, left, and Commerce Secretary Gary Locke in Washington.*

Locke said the new green economy will include developing energy-efficient lighting, meters and factory processes; rebuilding energy grids with systems that monitor and distribute clean energy more efficiently; new construction featuring green materials; improving emissions and energy monitoring; and smarter irrigation systems to feed agriculture that produces next-generation biofuels.

Part of the first step in this transition is to simply learn from what already works, he said. He cited the progress shown by the host of the climate conference — Denmark.

"In 1970, Denmark was almost entirely dependent on foreign sources of oil and

coal for its energy. Today, it is a net exporter of natural gas, oil and electricity," Locke said, adding that 20 percent of its energy comes from renewable sources.

Denmark's gross domestic product, the value of the goods and services it produces, has doubled in the past 40 years, but its overall energy consumption has remained about the same. Other nations have different demographic and geographic profiles from Denmark, Locke said, but the example Denmark sets with its political will and political action to grow such an economy is the point.

For the nations of the world to chart a new direction, Locke said, governments must

become aggressive in funding clean energy research and development, and aggressive in shaping market rules and regulations to create incentives for clean energy innovation. One step in the long journey, Locke said, will be to stop using harmful incentives that work against clean energy development.

One of those harmful incentives, he added, is that too many countries subsidize both the production and consumption of fossil fuels. President Obama has proposed the elimination of these subsidies. The International Energy Agency and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development estimated that this one step could cut greenhouse gas emissions 10 percent by 2050.

*(Continued on page 19)*



# Independent Centers Calculate Rising Temperatures for Earth

By Cheryl Pellerin  
Science Writer

**Washington** - Each month, scientists at three centers ? one in the United Kingdom and two in the United States ? independently combine data about conditions on Earth's surface to calculate the planet's average temperature.

The centers collect and process the data in different ways but, for decades, they have shown similar results: Global average temperature has increased over the past century and warming has been especially rapid since the 1970s.

"We're reporting what we see, and we see warming," said David Easterling, chief of the Scientific Services Division at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Climatic Data Center (NCDC). "There's no sleight of hand. People can have all sorts of consternation about it but we're just trying to be an unbiased source of information. The bottom line is that the science says it's warming. The line is going up."

The centers are the NCDC; NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies (GISS) in New York City; and the Met (meteorological) Office, the United Kingdom's Exeter-based national weather and climate information service, which works with the University of East Anglia ( <http://blogs.america.gov/climate/2009/12/10/hackers-climategate-and-why-climate-change-is-real/> ) to produce its monthly global average temperature reports (abbreviated as HadCRUT3).

## ONE PLANET, MANY TEMPERATURES

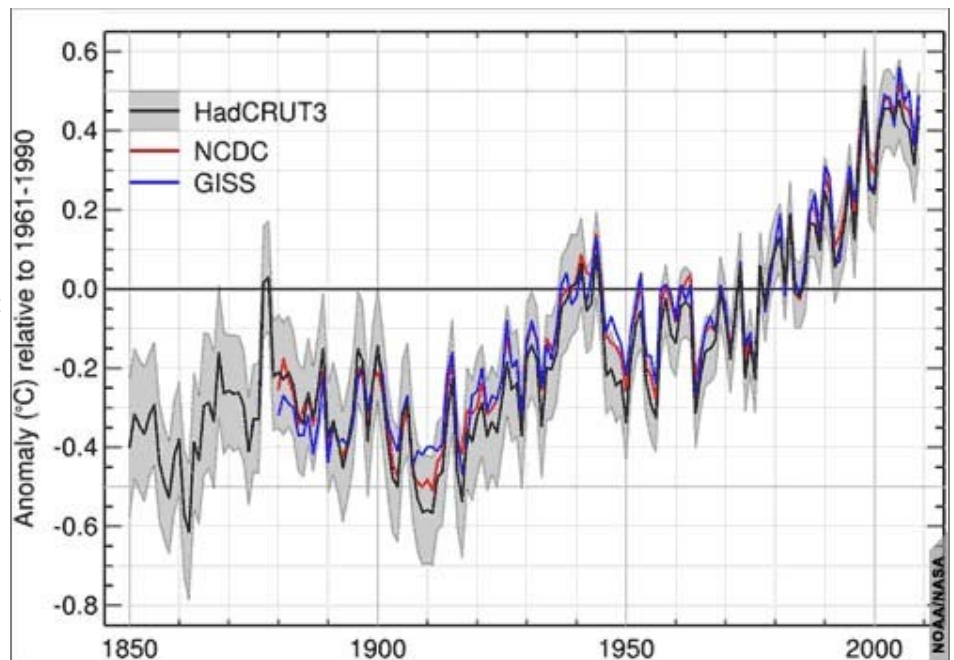
Global average temperature records are vital to understanding how the climate is changing. The calculations contribute to findings like those in the periodic assessment reports of the Nobel Prize-winning

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

But none of the centers maps actual temperatures, which are taken all over the world on land and sea at different heights from the ground, in different conditions, at different times of day, and with different kinds of equipment. Instead, the centers calculate temperature

ica.gov, is that not all parts of Earth are equally covered by weather stations or other observing systems.

"If you're missing data from a place that's abnormally cold, like the Arctic," Stott said, "the global temperature record for that month would warm up a bit. So you would have a change that wasn't due to climate change; it was due



*Correlation among three global average temperature records.*

anomalies ? deviations from normal temperature.

"Rather than say how warm or cold it is, you say how much warmer or colder it is compared to normal," GISS scientist Reto Ruedy said. "Ten degrees higher than normal means the same thing in summer and winter. It means the same thing on top of a mountain or near the equator ? deviation from the norm."

Another reason scientists use temperature anomalies rather than absolute temperature, Peter Stott, head of climate monitoring at the Met Office's Hadley Centre for Climate Change, told Amer-

to the fact that you'd lost one of your stations. If you use anomalies you don't have that problem ? missing data does not bias the temperature record."

## CALCULATING GLOBAL TEMPERATURE

Every day, thousands of temperature observations are taken around the planet. Land stations use the daily readings to create a monthly average that is sent off for use by climate researchers. Ocean observations from ships and buoys are sent to national meteorological services through a World Meteorological Organization network called the

*(Continued on page 16)*

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## Independent Centers Calculate Rising Temperatures for Earth . . .

*(Continued from page 15)*

Global Telecommunication System (GTS).

The HadCRUT3 record, produced by the Met Office with the University of East Anglia's Climatic Research Unit, takes in observations from about 2,000 land stations each month. Sea-surface temperature observations come from 1,200 ocean buoys and 4,000 ships in a voluntary observing program. Other buoys are moored in the tropics and coastal regions, mainly around the United States. Together they collect 1.5 million observations a month.

NCDC in North Carolina is the world's largest archive of weather and climate data. Its data come from NOAA and sometimes NASA; temperature, precipitation and other instrument readings from up to 30,000 weather stations worldwide; international data over the GTS; and data from 10,000 volunteers who monitor weather stations for the U.S. Cooperative Observer Network program. NCDC also has long-term data-exchange efforts with other countries,

including a 20-year program with China.

The data go through rigorous quality-control procedures before they enter the Global Historical Climatology Network, which NCDC uses to monitor long-term trends in temperature and precipitation. This data set was used in the IPCC Fourth Assessment Report and other international assessments. NCDC data are freely available through its Web site.

At GISS, a small part of the work is to calculate once a month its global average temperature anomaly maps and graphs. They download the collection of mean temperatures that NCDC creates from the monthly or daily reports of individual weather stations.

"GISS then combines these data to provide concise information about the current state of our planet compared to previous times," Ruedy said.

Each global temperature center uses different observation sets, but there are large overlaps in the data. Each has its own ways to check and process data and

to make the final calculation of global average temperature.

"The way you average up numbers from a whole bunch of climate stations around the world into one number for the globe can be done in an infinite number of ways," Easterling said. "We all do it a little bit differently and end up with slight differences in the numbers. But they all say the same thing ? it's warming."

More information on climate change ( <http://www.america.gov/global/enviro.html> ) is available from America.gov. Want to do something about climate change? Join the global conversation on Facebook ( <http://www.facebook.com/ConversationsClimate> ) and share your thoughts below.

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## Obama Accepts Nobel Prize with Call for Faith in Human Progress . . .

*(Continued from page 3)*

dom from fear, but freedom from want," and the absence of hope for better living conditions and opportunities "can rot a society from within."

For that reason, the world must also confront the issue of climate change. "There is little scientific dispute that if we do nothing, we will face more drought, more famine, more mass displacement — all of which will fuel more conflict for decades," he said.

With faith in human progress, Obama said, "let us reach for the world that ought to be — that spark of the divine

that still stirs within each of our souls."

"Somewhere today, in the here and now, in the world as it is, a soldier sees he's outgunned, but stands firm to keep the peace. Somewhere today, in this world, a young protestor awaits the brutality of her government, but has the courage to march on. Somewhere today, a mother facing punishing poverty still takes the time to teach her child, scrapes together what few coins she has to send that child to school, because she believes that a cruel world still has a place for that child's dreams."

"Let us live by their example," the president said.

A transcript of Obama's remarks ( <http://www.america.gov/st/texttrans-english/2009/December/20091210095800eafas0.3002436.html> ) is available on America.gov.

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## U.S.-European Economic Relationship Central to World Economy

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.  
Staff Writer

**Washington** — Direct investment in Ireland by the United States last year totaled \$146 billion, which was more than double the total U.S. investment in Russia, India and China combined, at \$71 billion, Under Secretary of State Robert Hormats says, illustrating the importance and depth of the trans-Atlantic economy.

“The U.S.-European economic relationship is one of the central drivers of the world economy,” Hormats said in Senate testimony December 9. “To put it in perspective, the value of U.S. goods and services exports to the [European Union] is over five times the value of our exports to China,” even though economic ties with China have garnered significant attention from Washington in recent months.

Hormats, who is under secretary of state for economic, energy and agricultural affairs, testified before the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on European Affairs, which was examining efforts to strengthen the trans-Atlantic economy as Western nations move from recession to recovery and growth.

Understanding the potential for boosting America’s international competitiveness and creating a stronger domestic jobs base are central to the economic relationship with Europe. Enhancing trade with Europe is one component, and attracting more foreign investment — which can produce high-quality jobs and bring new technologies — is another component, Hormats said. Enhanced technologies are one of the factors that have helped transform aging plants and equipment to the realities of the global economy and the competition it generates.



*Under Secretary of State Robert Hormats.*

“Europe is the most important foreign source of jobs in America,” Hormats testified. “In fact, the majority of foreigners working for European-owned companies outside of the EU are Americans.”

Frances Burwell, a vice president with the Atlantic Council, a Washington-based policy research center, told senators that the trans-Atlantic economy — the combined market of the United States and the European Union — is “the core of the global economic system,” comprising 54 percent of global gross domestic product, which is the combined value of goods and services produced in the world.

“Their markets represent mature, service-oriented economies that have been the major engines for innovation in both markets and technology for the last few decades,” Burwell said. “Because of the size and attractiveness of their markets, the United States and the EU, along with its member states, play a major role in shaping global standards and regulations.”

Hormats told the senators that because of the importance of European trade and investment in supporting high-quality jobs in the United States, making further efforts to remove barriers to commerce between the United States and Europe is vital, and that is true for both sides of the Atlantic Ocean.

The first concern is for enhanced trade liberalization, he said. The United States and EU enjoy relatively open markets, but other markets also need to become more open, and the most efficient way to achieve that is through the World Trade Organization (WTO). A new cycle of trade liberalization has been the long-sought goal of most nations since it was first offered at a WTO conference in November 2001 in Doha, Qatar. Its essential objective is the lowering of trade barriers worldwide, but talks have repeatedly stalled.

“We need the Europeans to help us promote an ambitious, balanced conclusion to the WTO [trade] talks,” he said.

The United States also wants to work with the EU in devising a new global financial regulatory system, promoting effective development assistance, improving supply-chain security through the World Customs Organization, and finding common ground on climate change measures, Hormats said.

Hormats also told senators that even as the United States and the EU work closely in strengthening their economic relationship, they must also promote market-based, rules-based approaches to economic policy in other countries, including in particular Russia, China, Brazil and India.

*(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov>) ♦*



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## Anti-Bribery Convention Has Made a Difference

By Patrick Moulette

**Paris** — Bribing public officials to obtain business advantages in international transactions carries a stigma and exposes corporations and their executives to an increased risk of successful prosecution, thanks to the OECD Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions.

The treaty, which entered into force in 1999, gave the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) a powerful tool against corruption. The group plays a leading role in the battle against cross-border graft — a scourge which has raised serious moral and political concerns, undermined good governance and economic development, and distorted international competition. The convention is the only international instrument that focuses on bribe-givers.

Countries that have signed the agreement must make it a crime for companies operating within their borders to bribe a foreign public official in order to obtain or retain international business (such as an infrastructure contract or a mining concession).

The 38 parties to the convention — the 30 OECD members plus Argentina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Chile, Estonia, Israel, Slovenia and South Africa — have implemented national legislation that criminalizes foreign bribery. None allow companies to claim tax deductions for bribe payments, as was the practice in some countries before the end of the 1990s. And all are working to prevent, detect, investigate and sanction foreign bribery cases.

The convention requires that signatories' foreign bribery laws apply to both individuals and companies that promise, offer or actually give a bribe. Bribery conducted through intermediaries and transactions that benefit third parties (such as an official's spouse) must also be included. Countries must consider foreign

countries. Companies have paid millions of euros or U.S. dollars in fines, and some executives have faced jail terms of up to five years.

This is remarkable, considering that before the convention foreign bribery was a crime in only a few countries and most companies considered bribery just a part of doing business internationally.

A key to the success of the convention is its peer-review monitoring process. This rigorous evaluation system is overseen by the Working Group on Bribery, which includes representatives of each party to the convention. The monitoring process motivates countries to honor their commitments under the convention and allows sharing of ideas and good practices.



*Siemens AG is only the latest in a string of companies prosecuted under national laws related to the OECD anti-bribery convention.*

bribery a crime even where the briber would have been awarded the contract if it had been sought purely on merit. Graft is considered a crime regardless of whether the bribe was accepted or an official actually provided an illicit advantage, or whether corruption is tolerated or even widespread in the country concerned.

Parties to the convention are also required to establish effective and proportionate sanctions in order to discourage bribery.

As a result of the convention, more than 250 cases are under investigation in the 38 signatory countries. During the past 10 years, about 150 companies, including such well-known firms as Lucent Technologies and Siemens AG, as well as individuals including corporate officers, have been sanctioned for committing foreign bribery and related offenses in host

Raising awareness of bribery in corporate practices and host governments' operations is an essential part of international efforts to intensify the fight against graft. Graft remains a challenge across several countries. Monitoring shows that their awareness campaigns related to anti-bribery laws often are insufficient. Many companies, especially small and medium-sized enterprises, remain ignorant that foreign bribery is illegal. The OECD is starting an initiative to raise global awareness of foreign bribery to support and boost individual countries' efforts to address the problem.

Although enforcement actions have increased since the convention entered into force, the OECD Working Group on Bribery and corruption-monitoring groups such as Transparency International urge more investigations and prosecutions of corporate bribery in

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See also

**<http://www.america.gov/>**

Telling America's story

**World Needs Political Will to Combat Climate . . .**

*(Continued from page 14)*

"We cannot say on the one hand that we want more clean energy while at the same time providing a slew of financial incentives that promote carbon-intensive fuels," Locke told delegates.

**COPENHAGEN CONFERENCE**

Locke spoke about global warming and its impact during the fifth day of the climate change conference. Other members of the U.S. administration have already spoken to delegates and more are scheduled to address the conference next week. Obama is scheduled to address the conference December 18.

The conference aims to draft an internationally binding treaty to control greenhouse gas emissions that are believed to be the cause of Earth's temperature rise.

Officially known as the 15th Session of the Conference of Parties to the U.N. Frame-

work Convention on Climate Change, or COP-15, the conference is working on an accord to succeed the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, which required 37 industrialized nations to cut greenhouse gas emissions an average of 5 percent by 2012.

Obama has already said the United States is prepared to set a U.S. emissions reduction target in the range of 17 percent below 2005 levels by 2020 and ultimately in line with final U.S. energy and climate legislation still pending in the Senate. The president's goal is to reduce emissions 83 percent by 2050. The expected pathway set forth in this pending legislation would entail a 30 percent reduction below 2005 levels in 2025 and a 42 percent reduction below 2005 levels in 2030.

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**Anti-Bribery Convention Has Made a Difference . . .**

*(Continued from page 18)*

overseas markets, particularly in nations that have lagged in cleaning up corporate corruption so far.

To further facilitate the prevention, detection and prosecution of foreign bribery, the OECD Working Group on Bribery signed into action in November a new anti-bribery recommendation. This recommendation provides measures for combating small facilitation payments, for protecting whistleblowers, and for improving lines of communication between public officials and law enforcement authorities.

An increasingly globalized marketplace has made it easier to engage in corruption and more difficult to detect it. Unscrupulous businesses faced with an



***KBR and its former owner, Halliburton, paid more than \$500 million in fines for bribing a Nigerian official.***

increased risk of prosecution resort to paying bribes through intermediaries. That is why countries must enforce their laws vigorously, keep up monitoring corporate behavior, and work together across borders to combat bribery in international transactions.

The OECD plans to work toward extending the convention's reach to emerging economies. Key players such as China, India and Russia must join international efforts to combat corporate graft. As these countries conduct more business beyond their borders, the tough standards in the OECD convention should serve as an international benchmark for their anti-bribery efforts.

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